

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KINGST 06821 292010Z

ACTION ARA-14

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TAGS: ETRD, JM

SUBJECT: OUTLOOK FOR TOURISM IN JAMAICA

REF: A. KINGSTON 4931 B. KINGSTON 6150

1. A RECENT DAILY GLEANER EDITORIAL CHALLENGED THE VALIDITY OF TOURISM PROJECTIONS MADE BY GOJ MINISTER OF STATE IN CHARGE OF TOURISM JACK STEPHENSON (SEE REF. B) AND WONDERED HOW MUCH OF HIS OPTIMISTIC PROJECTIONS ARE BASED "ON A TRUE READING OF THE TRAVEL MARKET IN TERMS OF WHAT JAMAICA CAN ACHIEVE, OR HOW MUCH OF IT IS BASED ON WHAT HAS PROVEN IN THE PAST TO BE NOT MUCH BETTER THAN WISHFUL THINKING."

2. IN HIS REPLY TO THE EDITOR OF THE DAILY GLEANER, MINISTER STEPHENSON SET OUT THE FOLLOWING CHART TO ILLUSTRATE THAT STARTING AUGUST 1977 JAMAICA EXPERIENCED THE BEGINNING "OF A PHENOMENAL TURN-AROUND WITHIN THE INDUSTRY, WHICH MATURED INTO AN EXCEPTIONALLY GOOD WINTER."

STOPOVER VISITORS 1977/78

1977	1978
PER CENT	PER CENT

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 KINGST 06821 292010Z

NO.	CHANGE	NO.	CHANGE
AUG. 17,082	10.4	JAN. 40,995	34.8
SEPT. 16,898	25.0	FEB. 41,879	53.7
OCT. 24,782	15.3	MAR. 50,600	60.6

NOV. 20,168 7.9 APR. 42,000 78.5

DEC. 22,905 16.9 MAY 21,000 52.9

3. TO REFUTE THE ARGUMENT THAT JAMAICA ENJOYED THIS HIGH PERCENTAGE INCREASE BECAUSE IT MOVED FROM A LOW BASE RATE, MINISTER STEPHENSON SAID THAT IS NOT THE CASE AS MOST OF OUR COMPETITORS HAD A LOWER BASE RATE. AS CAN BE SEEN BY THE FOLLOWING STOPOVER VISITOR CHART, ONE OF JAMAICA'S MAIN COMPETITORS, BARBADOS, HAD A LOWER BASE RATE, WHILE BERMUDA SHOWED AN OVERALL NEGATIVE GROWTH RATE.

	JAN.-MAY 1977	JAN.-MAY 1978	PER CENT CHANGE
JAMAICA	128,395	199,474	PLUS 55.5
BARBADOS	105,312	117,950	PLUS 12.0
BERMUDA	181,525	154,660	-14.8

(NOTE: NOT CITED BY MINISTER STEPHENSON AND NOT AVAILABLE TO THIS EMBASSY ARE STATISTICS FOR OTHER TOURISM RIVALS, E.G. THE BAHAMAS, WHERE THE 1977-78 WINTER SEASON AND THIS SUMMER REPORTEDLY REGISTERED RECORD VISITOR LEVELS.)

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PAGE 03 KINGST 06821 292010Z

4. THE MINISTER ALSO POINTED OUT THAT, CONTRARY TO STATEMENTS THAT PACKATE TOURS ARE NOT AS FINANCIALLY REWARDING AS NON-PACKAGE TOURS, THE FOLLOWING COMPARATIVE CHARTS BETWEEN 1970 AND 1977 INDICATE THAT THE PACKAGE VISITOR NOW SPENDS MORE THAN THE NON-PACKAGE VISITOR.

	1970	WINTER	SUMMER	YEAR (AVERAGE)
PACKAGE	J\$248	J\$208	J\$216	
NON-PACKAGE	J\$294	J\$207	J\$247	
1977				
PACKAGE	J\$414	J\$349	J\$371	
NON-PACKAGE	J\$384	J\$279	J\$314	

5. MINISTER STEPHENSON EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT, WITH NEW MARKET DIVERSIFICATION INCLUDING THE OPENING UP OF THE U.S. WEST COAST AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF EUROPEAN CHARTER PROGRAMS, THE JAMAICAN TOURIST INDUSTRY WILL

MEET THE PROJECTIONS STATED IN REF. B. HE SAID THAT THE
TOURIST INDUSTRY HAS MET AND IN SOME CASES SURPASSED EARLIER
PROJECTIONS.
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